MANCHESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD.

DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE.

An Address

BY

Prof. HENRY JONES, LL.D., D.Litt.,

(*Hibbert Lecturer in Metaphysics*),

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

OPENING OF THE 122ND SESSION,

14TH OCTOBER, 1907.

The College adheres to its original principle of freely imparting Theological knowledge without insisting on the adoption of particular Theological doctrines.

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Divine Transcendence.

In what I shall say to-day on the difficult subject of Divine Transcendence, I do not hope to do more than break ground—cut the first turf. Indeed, my sole object is to lead up to the problems the idea involves, and indicate the conditions under which we can most fruitfully consider it in the future.

But, first, let me say that I am glad to be here once more, amongst my colleagues and with my students. The opening of the academical year seems always to me an occasion for congratulation. There are few, if any, better ways of beating out the music of a good life than by the intercourse of master and disciple, where, if the relations are sound and healthy, both teach and both learn, and both gain much happiness in the process.

I should like to-day, however, to extend my congratulations further afield, so as to embrace those who devote something of their minds to the care, and of their means to the maintenance, of this College. For that, too, is a privilege. It is, perhaps, not so obvious as that of teaching and being taught, but is concealed, as many best things are, under the guise of self-sacrificing service. Still, it *is* a privilege to serve some causes, and your, or *our*, cause here is very good. You are supporting and guiding the concerns of an institution which is in some respects unique. It is the only college with which I have been connected in which the pursuit of truth in things of the spirit, and especially in religion, is as free as in the region of physical phenomena. When I survey the theological world, with its creeds and sects and shibboleths, this little College seems to me to stand out as a happy exception, like a green oasis in a vast waste, or, better,

like a clear place amidst the entangling undergrowths of a thick forest. *Here* the path is clear to the feet, and the blue sky is to be seen overhead. The going is comparatively easy; we can move straight on in a sincere quest, guided by the plain light of the broad day.

In caring for and supporting such an institution you are, in my opinion, assisting a cause which is certain to arrive; for, in that slow and laborious way in which alone great ends are achieved by mankind, the time is coming when men's souls shall commune with the things of religion with the same clear brow as they hold converse with the things of nature. We will always, in our intercourse with spiritual realities, find our minds entangled in prejudices, confused by passion, and obscured by ignorance; we will always find absolute singleness of spirit, pure loyalty to what is real, utter dispassionateness and judiciousness, difficult to attain; but the time is surely approaching, little by little, when the prejudices and passions which no individual can ever quite escape shall no longer bear the *imprimatur*, or be supported by the prestige, of institutions. Apart from theological colleges, there are now none in all the land, whether devoted to the Arts or to the Sciences, which would not be ashamed to proclaim themselves the devotees of fixed convictions, or the mere exponents of authoritative dogmata. Behind all the endeavour of these secular institutions, and forming its permanent background, is the conviction that Truth, which in its very nature is one and eternal, is also, so far as concerns the growing consciousness of man, always *in the making*. The truths that prove permanent are *living* truths; they are hypotheses which grow in security with their extended application, experiences which become mellow, like wine and wisdom, because the subtle changes of constant enrichment somehow go along with their permanence and deepen their certainty. I do not see why the concerns of the human soul,

and its intercourse with its God, should be contemplated in any other spirit, or by any other method, than those which have animated and guided research in other quarters; nor why theological institutions should not, like others, reverence the past for the sake of the future, and be loyal to the teachings of the past, because they are guides to more elevated heights from which, as the ages move, a wider and clearer survey may be gained of the way of God's dealings with mankind. In this respect, looking forward to times of fuller knowledge of the things of the spirit, the supporters and governors and officers and students, and all the friends of this College, are pioneers of a great cause, which is sure to prosper, if man is destined to be free.

For freedom, the freedom we prize as members and supporters of this College, is no *negative* freedom, which seeks to cut itself away from the learning and the wisdom of the past. It is because we desire to lay the whole of that learning and wisdom under tribute that we demand freedom. We believe that "The Earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," and therefore we refuse to regard God as having revealed Himself *only* to one sect, or *only* to one age, or *only* in one book, or in the history of only one nation. We believe that "All is one scheme, and that God is the meaning of it." We wish to be free, not to flee from his presence, but to seek it everywhere—in every literature, in all history, under the guise of every religion and of every form of civilisation. For is it not the bedrock of all our religious convictions that God dwelleth in all things, sustaining them with his goodness? "If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." We believe, to use the passing language of the day, that God is Immanent; and, having this faith, we turn

back nowhere from seeking Him, not even from the obscure and troubled sea of human history, with its injustice and wrong, its suffering and sorrow, its selfish passions and follies and the utter misery of its sinfulness—wrongs not rectified for the individual, sorrows not removed in this life, but sitting close to the heart till it beats no more, passions not overcome, sins whose stains remain even when their rule is broken, lives sinking out of sight into the deeps of death, still burdened by their imperfections. We believe that somehow God dwells in all, and this is a faith which we can in no wise forego. Death itself, the passing of the incomplete life, the imperfect, the burdened and weary, into a silence which is broken by no faintest echo and a stillness for evermore—death is still His dwelling-place, somehow the manifestation of His benevolence, perhaps His crowning gift.

We desire to be free to make good this faith, if that be possible. We want to be allowed, as best we can, to look facts everywhere in the face, and seek in all of them the ratification, if they can yield it, of this supreme hypothesis of the religious life. For I am convinced that if God is not everywhere, if He lives not in the moral world—not weakening its contrasts, but deepening them, lending a new glory and a wider reach to goodness, a more sorrowful significance to all wrong, and a new terror and pitifulness to sin—then He is not the God our souls want. We desire to be free to seek a God in whom our souls shall be satisfied, and who shall saturate us with his loving kindness; and I utterly mis-read the spirit of man if it can be satisfied with a God whose perfection is in any way limited, or without that knowledge of Him which shall fill the soul as "the waters cover the sea."

This utter freedom of research we must demand in these days with new urgency. Many causes have contributed to bring about a condition of mind which must subject the convictions out of which religious life springs to new and severe tests. The general

habit of thought amongst educated people in this country, the way in which they ordinarily confront the practical as well as the theoretical problems of life, has made them restive under an authority that is external. The principles of our political life, not less than those of religion, must commend themselves to our own understanding. Democracy in politics, which is essentially a claim to rule our own practical life, necessarily carries with it a like claim in the sphere of religion. We will not, even if we could, and we can not even if we would, accept our beliefs on authority: at the very least that authority must disguise itself under the form of tradition, and thereby exercise its power without our questioning it, or suspecting its existence. And it is almost impossible for educated persons, in these days, not to question the religious traditions in which they were nurtured. Further, the very growth of the religious consciousness itself has added new gravity to the problems of religious faith. For growth always brings its penalties—if it be, indeed, a penalty that, whether in his thinking or in his practice, the tasks of man increase with his strength, and that he is meant to grow, not stop.

The most significant evidence of the growth of the religious consciousness in recent times I find in the relative universality of the conviction of what we call the Immanence, or indwelling of God, and what our fathers called His Omnipresence.

The value of this conception is beyond all price, and the demonstration of it by the most costly process of the labouring civilizations of mankind—for that is what advancing mankind is doing as its ultimate task, finding better its nearness to God, the beginning and end of its life in Him—is not too dearly purchased. I should like to dwell upon its value, but I can only flash my little lantern upon it in passing.

(1) If this conception be true, then the world of nature becomes, in its essence, spiritual. Its order remains unfailing, but it is no

longer pitiless. The universe is not any more indifferent to, or the antagonist of, the nobler ends of man, but the generous source of all his spiritual equipment, giving him all the content of his knowledge and disciplining his will out of caprice into respect for an order which is rational, and the partner of all his enterprises.

(2) And in the world of human relations—of the virtues, duties, the practical opportunities whereby man realizes his powers,—the transforming power of this conception is still higher. In virtue of it societies which men form, the mutual relations which by their intercourse they weave out of their own substance, are not secular any more. The family, which began with the relation of flesh to flesh, attains an ethical worth and beauty unspeakably higher. The flesh is seen to be rose-tinted with a higher meaning, with the spiritual love of soul for soul, and the family is an emblem, nay, an actual realization and embodiment within its own limits of the very love of God Himself. The crafts, professions, the industrial organizations where men combine their powers, and which at present are the arena of contests that are too often harsh and selfish and ignoble are, if this be true, meant to provide men with their station and sphere of duties, by means of which shall be called forth the sterner powers of their manhood. The State which even now so far holds the conflicting ends of men together and fits their enterprises into one whole, that they are not quite incoherent but constitute a single people which, at least in times of stress, shows itself capable of having one will, one spirit, and one purpose,—the secular State itself becomes a moral institution, a spiritual entity in which, as by the coming of His Kingdom, God reveals Himself.

(3) More evidently still does this idea give to morality a new value and validity. There is no material duty which does not gain significance from this divine context, and become a willing obedience to the Absolute and a service to God.

"*I* was an hungred, and ye gave *me* meat; *I* was thirsty, and ye gave *me* drink; *I* was a stranger, and ye took *me* in; Naked, and ye clothed *me*." Therefore is the good man in his place and at his work so clothed in dignity and in power. He is in the service of the Most High, and the principle of all reality sustains him. He knows that He is invincible. On his way to ignominious death, he can say, with quiet conviction, "I have overcome the world." The Immanence of God in the moral world carries with it absolute security of victory to him who strives. Some say that that consciousness stifles effort, and drugs the soul with the cloying sweetness of an opiate. They little realise the meaning of their words, or the mood in which they speak. They ignore the *conditions* of this splendid optimism—that its promises are all for those who strive, and who risk all—for they devote their very selves—in the enterprise; and they forget that the soldier "fights" well if he thinks his cause good and his commander invincible. No man (or nation) ever did his best, or brought forth what was highest in him, except under the conviction that his cause was not his own merely, not the choice of his own capricious will, but imposed upon him by an authority which was divine and sure to prosper.

But I must pass on. It seems to be a law of man's growth that every new achievement brings new risks and new difficulties; for our growth seems to be conditional upon our being kept upon the strain. And this last great achievement of religious thought is no exception. It has brought difficulties which, in these days, are causing men to break loose from conceptions which seem to me to be vital to the religious and, indeed, to every other form of the rational consciousness.

So long as God, in his infinitude, dwelt apart, there was room for the finite with all its imperfections. A God who was a mere Creator could, without any obtrusive or obvious inconsequence, be held to stand aloof from the world and its imperfections.

Spirit which is ever benevolent because it is the light and law of all seeing for the intelligence and of freedom for the will, could dwell side by side with matter and its blind necessity and pitiless ways. God's love stood clear somehow, although the earth were one arena for the struggle of greed and strength. He was not near enough to His world to be infected with its evil; and, on the other hand, our love for living things was too shallow to touch us deeply with their pains and raise a cry of indignation against a God which was not at strife with nature's cruelty. We could tolerate ideas of eternal punishment for men very well. Our ethical conceptions were crude. Again, so long as God as Spirit was self-inclosed, and the personality of man, with its intelligence, purposes, volitions and choice was an isolated and private thing, it seemed easy to account for man's freedom, to make his responsibilities his very own, and to retain the antagonism of good and evil in his life and fate. But now that God is not shut out of man's life, but conceived as the Immanent reality and principle of all, even of spiritual existence, dreadful alternatives seem to arise before us. Either the principle which manifests itself in finite being is itself finite and imperfect, or else the imperfections of finite reality are only seeming. Either the risks of the moral enterprise, the real possibility of failure, sin, of uttermost disaster exist for God Himself, in which case He, like ourselves, struggles with His own imperfections, and, at best, is only foremost in the battle; or, on the other hand, if God be perfect, and his cause of necessity triumphant, then are the risks of life but empty show, and the whole moral endeavour of mankind a struggle against merely apparent evil, the idle play of light and shade upon the surface of an eternal substance which itself knows no change or shadow of turning, but is, will be, was, for ever perfect.

It will assist us to do justice to certain recent movements in philosophical and religious thought if we bear this in mind. The

difficulties are not new, I need hardly say, nor have they been overlooked by reflective men in the past. But they do, and ought to, come upon us with a new urgency. They spring naturally, inevitably, from this conception of Immanence. They are consequences which flow from the last great truth that religious thought has achieved; for it is realised, as it never was before by the general conditions to mankind, that if God is, He must be all in all.

Now this emergence into vital significance of a great conception in any sphere of human experience is a demand for re-interpreting *the whole* of that experience. Such a demand is made always in a particular science by a new hypothesis. It is made whenever a higher purpose, or a new principle of behaviour, is adopted. The hypothesis, or the practical principle must transform, re-value all that falls under it in every detail. If there be created within us a clean heart, we shall have clean hands. When we observe the outer world, or our inner selves from a new standpoint, everything they contain wears a new aspect, their proportions and relations are changed, things that were losses before become gains, and gains become losses.

Hence, it will take us a long time and much spiritual toil to accommodate our thoughts and to solve the theoretical and practical difficulties which the conception of God's presence as veritable, intimate—intimate as our very substance, has brought. The problems are very difficult.

But of one matter in this obscure and difficult region I think we may be sure—namely, that the solutions which destroy either of the opposed elements are false. If it be true, as averred, that the Idealistic doctrine of the absoluteness of God compels us to regard the imperfections of finite being, the tragic woes of this world of ours as not real, then the doctrine cannot stand. It is inconsistent with the facts of experience: so inconsistent as hardly to be worthy of respectful consideration. No

condemnation can be too severe of an Optimism that makes light of the sorrow of mankind, and that turns religious faith into sentimental and at the same time cruel complacency—if indeed, anyone can maintain such a theory, in a world whose inhabitants are all "acquainted with grief," and which, if it does make its way slowly towards light and peace, leaves at every weary step a blood-stained footprint. *Such* an Optimism is absurd; and no one *does* hold it. On the other hand, though this is less evident, the opposite, or Pragmatic doctrine, cannot stand. It avers that there are elements of evil in this world which are primary, indestructible, "like the atoms or sub-atoms of the physical world," and that such a world implies a God who is Himself finite in wisdom, in power, and in goodness. This theory of ultimate irrationalities cannot stand, because in appearing to do justice to the facts of experience, it destroys the very principles on which *any* rational experience can rest.

I propose, if time permits, to deal with this theory, but not to-day. I desire rather to face the problem itself, and leave on one side all solutions of it which I deem unsatisfactory. In doing so, I put my trust in what is, I believe, a law of our thought. The law is that the circumstance which creates a problem, if it be a rational or legitimate problem, contains the terms of its solution. A rational problem implies opposing elements *within* some single conception. There is no problem except where there is at least apparent incompatibility. And there is no incompatibility except when opposites meet within the same unity.

Problems in geometry rest on some specific view of space, which they presuppose, and the answer amounts to some further explication of the nature of the relations of figures within *that* space, and thereby of the nature of space itself. Similarly, problems in physics, or in chemistry, or in biology, rest on presuppositions, or hypotheses, as to the nature of energy, or of life

and its general laws. The answer to the problems is the further explication of the underlying principles within which opposing elements call for reconciliation.

Now, as we have seen, the conception which has brought our difficulties upon us is that of Divine Immanence—that is, the conception of the infinite and finite in a relation of uttermost intimacy. It is in that conception, therefore, that their solution is to be sought. Hence, it follows, that any theories which violate, or render meaningless this conception, instead of solving the problem, stultify it. The very problem implies that both of the terms, and their relation, must be maintained. We cannot abandon either the infinite or the finite, either the object of religion or the conditions of morality, nor can we destroy their relation.

It is only just to remark that such an explicit abandonment of either term of the relation is intended by none of the schools of philosophy. The Idealists, *e.g.*, do not intend to merge the finite in the infinite, or to destroy the moral consciousness. Nor, on the other hand, do the Pragmatists intend to lose the infinite and leave only the finite, or to destroy the religious consciousness. It is true that Professor James says: "I, personally, give up the absolute. I find that it entangles me in metaphysical paradoxes that are inacceptable." He seeks to serve, not to betray, religion, and to make the salvation of the world a joint endeavour of God and man—"a social scheme of co-operative work genuinely to be done." Success is uncertain. "It is a real adventure, with real danger; the world is not certain to be saved," yet it may win through, for God is there, though he is limited in his power and goodness, "one helper amongst others, *primus inter pares*, in the midst of all the shapers of the great world's fate."

Unfortunately, however, neither men nor theories can be justified by their "good intentions." And both the theory that destroys the finite and that which destroys the infinite fail, and

fail because they destroy the problem itself in seeking to solve it; for the problem is that of the *relation* of these two terms, the immanence of the one in the other. In the one case all is perfect already, the universe is a fixed order in which every finite thing, even if it had real existence, is quite determined by the whole, so that—to use Professor James' phrase—it is fixed in its place, and cannot "wiggle." In the other case there is neither in the universe, nor in God, any principle to inspire, or guide, or in any way bring about the amelioration desired. The process is guided by no end. The universe begins with being an aggregate of accidents, pluralistic, discontinuous, irrational, and of itself cannot become otherwise. There is nothing actual within it to change its character, no colligating or constituting principle amongst its accidents to which it can conform. To bring about order out of the initial chaos requires a miracle. But there is none to work the miracle. For God is Himself finite, helpless to bring about this great change, a part and no more of a universe broken in fragments.

What both of these theories do is quite plain: they destroy either the finite or the infinite, so that the question of Immanence cannot really arise. They stultify the conception they should explain, they do away with the problem in pretending to solve it. And the result is that on one theory morality, and on the other religion, is plainly impossible.

I suggest that we can avoid this tragical conclusion by grasping more firmly the principle of *Immanence*, from which the difficulties have sprung. For, in my opinion, the idea of *Immanence*, often as it is on our lips, is by no means always in our minds. The finite and the infinite are not grasped together; they do not come together *as one* in our thoughts. The universal principle which sustains all things, stands apart from them. It appears as a bond, a connecting entity, a third somewhat over and above the particulars it conjoins.

In our more emotional experience we seem to overcome this separateness. The language and the spirit of devotion carries us beyond it. In the ardour of our love for Him, we know that our love of Him is His love of Himself in us. When we fling the whole soul, against all earthly odds, into His service, we know that we have no will except His will, and that our own will is the mightier on that account. In dying we live, and live a larger life in losing ourselves to find ourselves. The unity is there, deep as our very nature, so that it is His life which beats in our arteries, but it by no means destroys the difference. God is more for the good man than he can express at such times, and yet it is just at such times that he is set free from the bonds of his own limitations, and the hidden splendour of his possibilities flashes forth, though, alas, only to fall back again into separateness and littleness.

What I am pointing to is that the fact of this indwelling, the veritable immanence which does not destroy but lifts to its highest point our individuality, is a fact of religious experience. I want that fact *acknowledged*, whether we can explain it or not. And, in the next place I want to make clear that it is our thinking which destroys the unity, and separates; and above all that it is our *wrong* thinking, for it is not faithful to the *facts* of our spiritual life.

What do we require then? Another sort of mind and understanding? A reason that is intuitive and not discursive, as is often alleged?

Not so, in my opinion. We want to use the powers we have more accurately. When we thus separate we are victims of a fallacy, and our thoughts are ruled by assumptions of which we are not aware, and which we have never examined or tried to prove true. This is true of other departments of our thought. We commit the same blunder in our secular inquiries. We seek in physical science to know what matter is, matter in itself and

not its mere qualities or appearances. We wish to know what energy verily is, apart from the stress and strain, and transmutations through which it passes as it becomes now light, now sound, now heat, now electricity—what is the protean thing in itself. We ask what is life, the vital principle itself, and are not content with its activities and manifestations. We ask what is the mind, itself, the mind which *has* the ideas, the spirit, the soul, the person who actually possesses its experiences. We want to find not only the thoughts, but the thinker who lives in all the thoughts, not only the volitions but the actual living will, not merely the succession of feelings and emotions, but the soul itself which is moved.

Well, we have never found them—have we? We know more every day *about* physical energy, about matter; but what either is in itself, as the bare, naked reality, we seem to be no nearer handling or grasping. We know more about life in every form, vegetable, animal, rational, for the sciences are making a great pace, but we are no nearer answering, what life itself is, what the universal is which dwells in its manifestations. The same holds true of our religious reflexion. When we contemplate the majestic order of the natural universe as a whole, we divine more and more surely the presence of a power that makes unrestingly in its shifting scenes for a beauty that is unutterable, but we cannot reach that power itself, or touch it naked with our naked thought. And when we survey the stranger world of man's history, from those dim ages when men lived in caves, and when the movements of their souls were obscure, limited, almost like the brute's, when the light of reason flickered feebly in a world all dark, up to the present, where the institutions of civilization which men have founded surpass in marvellousness the physical frame of things which mirrors itself in their minds—who can help divining the presence in this long, slow process upwards, of a power making for a beauty greater and more akin to terror

than that of nature, nay for a righteousness and love that turns the terror into trust. Yet we cannot come upon that power by itself. We cannot *see* God, we can but divine that He is there. The universe seems both to declare and to hide him. The physical, nay the moral order, is like a lovely statue, instinct with meaning, breaking out into beauty in every part; but the meaning and beauty do not come forth in their naked purity from the grosser material which they inform. The universe is a metaphor, which half conceals and half reveals, while our souls thirst for *God* Himself, not for his manifestations. We would find the Master in his House. We would not touch His vesture only, not the hem of his garment, but our own loving Lord.

But this quest, after all, is in a manner blind, is not a quest for what we really want. Physical science after all does not want physical energy apart, unexpressed, present neither in stress nor strain; biology does not want a life that is *not* active, that does not break out in new forms, nor manifest its power; psychology does not want a soul that is not thinking, or not willing, or not seeking to do the right; neither do we want the deistic God who stood clear of his universe. All these abstract universals are blanks, unities without content, principles without power or meaning. They are not worth the finding. It is good that they cannot be found, and to the credit of our intellect; for, against a God who is thus aloof, Positivism and Agnosticism have brought objections which are finally irrefutable. The only answer which the finite *can* give or ought to give, on such a pre-supposition of separateness is "Not Here, but yonder, yonder, yonder, for evermore;" while what the soul craves for is that he should be *Here*, within His Kingdom, which is itself within ourselves.

We must begin our quest, therefore, in a new way, not with parts any more, which we can never bring together, nor with man who is aloof from God, or God who is aloof from man, but with God as the meaning and verity of our being, *in* whom alone

we live and move. We want to observe, not the putting of things *together*, nor the coming of the absolute out of an isolation which is really finitude, but the self-articulation, the flowing forth of a Love which being Love never could be isolate, a love which comprehends its object from the beginning, and finds its very being therein and its eternal joy.

With this conception verily in our hands I believe we shall discover that Divine Immanence implies Divine Transcendence, that the God who manifests *Himself* in the Universe, not only fills it with His presence, but in filling it excels it. We shall not be constrained to deny the finite, we shall not be callous to the pain of the world, but awake to it, sharers of its fate, mingling our sighs with its groaning, travailing in its labour as it seeks delivery from the bondage of corruption; and, at the same time, we shall know that God Himself is within its striving, sharing its sorrows, inspiring all its struggles and guiding its stumbling steps. And as a finite purpose is present in all the processes by which it is reached, leading to its own realization, greater than the processes, because it is the origin, and the end of them, and all the movement from origin to end, so is God in all, yet transcending all, greater than all, because, comprehending all—His gracious will present in the striving of Humanity, and, as its source, its movement and its goal, excelling it in all ways. And if this be verily so, then, in the face of all the misery of man and failures, we shall still trust Him as perfect in all His ways.

But how can this be, you ask? Is there any symbol, analogue, metaphor, parable, which can make such a conception palpable in any degree to our thought?

I would answer that in our own spirits there is already in our possession more than a symbol, or analogue, or parable—there is, in its degree, the very fact itself. Only *in its degree* it is true; for as spirits, as thinking, willing existences, we are imperfectly

realised. Over against our intelligence there are facts which to us are still enigmata, and yield their meaning to us only by little and little, and grudgingly. Over against our will there are obstacles within and without, which limit its freedom; for freedom is like knowledge and goodness, not a thing ready-made, but a potency to be realised, a promise to be made good—not a negative detachment, but a positive power to be achieved over ourselves and the world in which we are placed. These limitations, of course, we must strive to set aside when we think of God. For the broken arc we must substitute, as best we can, the perfect round, maintaining our hold upon a Transcendence, which is still Immanence, seeking God *within* the finite, not beyond, keeping our feet the while firmly planted upon our experience, and employing our own nature as spirits for our best, our only veritable guide.

Here, I believe, is the paramount task of the philosophical and religious reflexion of our day—not in the hurtling warfare of the abstract onesidedness of a false Idealism or of Pragmatism. It is to enquire into the nature of spirit.

So far we have been blinding ourselves with metaphors, looking at spirit in every light except its own, interpreting it, or, rather, misinterpreting it, by means of mechanical, biological and other ideas. We want to look within ourselves, not indeed for the foundation of things after the manner of the older thought—for the basis is far too narrow; but for a clue to their nature, as the ruling category, the supreme instrument of enquiry in this realm.

And what, you ask, do you expect to find in spirit when thus looked at in its own light? Much, my friends; more than can be set forth by me, though I laboured even to the end in this quest.

In ourselves, as living spirits, there is a principle which must break out into partial manifestations of itself, that is all now in

this act, or this thought, all now in *that* act and that thought; and which yet holds all its successive thoughts and acts in a timeless whole, so that *we are* what we have been, and in us *now* is the promise and potency of all that we shall yet attain. And what is this except an Immanence which is also Transcendence? In our own experience there is that victory over difference, which does not abolish difference but lives in it. Why! we can't be selves, without knowing our selves, at least in part; and we cannot know ourselves except by constituting ourselves into not-selves, into objects. Everywhere, in every thought that is true and in every volition that is right, we are building up against ourselves an outer order which limits us, and binds down our caprice, giving us laws which we must obey. And yet these very seeming obstacles, the growing order of the world as it appears to science, and the growing authority of the laws of the moral world for the will that is loyal to the right—these seeming obstacles are themselves stepping-stones to a life that is still wider, where order is still more authoritative over mind and heart, where rule is still more necessary, and where necessity is yet freedom.

The way is dark, even when we take in our hands the lamp of our own spirits, lit, we believe, at the very fountain of all light, but by its help we shall escape *some* of the obstacles against which we stumble now. *Some* of the difficulties of religious thought will be removed, and we shall no longer find it vain to hope that the essential truth of the highest religion we know, namely, that of Jesus, shall become a true possession. We shall know that we are God's, and that God is ours, and that His love maintains our life, nay, is the life of our life, the very splendour of our being.